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-W. H. Phillips-

"Thy white peaks, too, were mine"

QUIVIRA

BY

HARRISON CONRARD

*Illustrated with original drawings by Charles C. Svendsen
and W. E. Rollins*



BOSTON

RICHARD G. BADGER

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AD MATREM

*Belovèd, thou hast led
My feet through field and heather,
Flower-sweets beneath, o'erhead
Glad skies that smiled fair weather:
Come, come, and we shall tread
Once more the paths together.*

OUT WEST

When the world of waters was parted by the stroke
 of a mighty rod,
Her eyes were the first of the lands of earth to look
 on the face of God;
The white mists robed and throned her, and the
 sun in his orbit wide
Bent down from his ultimate pathway and claimed
 her his chosen bride;
And He that had formed and dowered her with the
 dower of a royal queen,
Decreed her the strength of mighty hills, the peace
 of the plains between;
The silence of utmost desert, and cañons rifted and
 riven,
And the music of wide-flung forests where strong
 winds shout to heaven.

SHARLOT M. HALL

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QUIVIRA

Greed is; and full of blame the red desire
That prompts its murderous passion. Kings are
slaves

No less than beggars to it; world-strewn graves
Mark its wide waste; ne'er flames the jealous fire
Of war where perjured power doth not aspire
To some unholy profit; never craves
A soul for its foul meed but finds it knaves
Through sin and death to urge its aims for hire.
In quest, a god; pursued, a phantom; found,
A thing of hell with all the stench of hell
About it, choking into fevered swound
The noble virtues with the fumes that swell
From its foul essence: yet its luring sound
All men enticeth, knowing this full well.

Seductive whispers of a land of gold,
Far to the north, had touched the empire where
Castilian greed, usurping Aztec crown,
O'er pagan dust had reared its capital.
So was anew the lust for treasure fired
Within the breasts of Spain's adventurous crew,
And newer conquest for new gain proposed

With faint report of far-off Cibola,
Walled in with gold, another whisper came
Of myriad souls in pagan shadow darked,

Waiting the touch of Christ's redemption-light
Themselves to glorify. So was anew,
In the wide fields of His transcendent love,
The sweet desire for newer conquest fired
Within the bosoms of Christ's hallowed few,
Who for His sake so loved their fellow-men
Danger and death no dull repugnance found
In them that love pursuing.

Cavaliers,
Gay in the plumage of Castilian pride,
Eager as love love's eager casement seeking,
Lured by a dream of Ophir, treasure-bound,
Rode out in quest thereof; but not for gold
Did he who led them forth the venture try:
Fray Marcos he, his inspiration born
Of that pure love for fellow, in pursuit
Of which if death be found its recompense,
Most sweet were death.

They went, returned, and bore
To Sinaloa's capital report
Of the vast land far to the north and west,
In treasure rich, and rich in restless souls
That yearned to cast the old tradition down,
Beating to dust its monstrous gods of stone,
And in the New Tradition joyous hail
The benediction-sign of El Señor.

Born were new hopes of these entrada tales,
And of new hopes were new ambitions born,
Which, taking form, into the fabled land
Another journey urged. Proud knights were they,

And when forth from the gates of Culiacan
Rode Coronado and his cavaliers,
High were their hopes of conquest and of gold
In the enchanted lands of Cibola:
But in the hearts of those of high desire —
Fray Marcos, he whose foot the land had trod,
And Fray Padilla — in the fore advancing,
Hopes were of conquest in the treasure-fields
Of Christ's sweet glory.

Through the wilderness,
Gay, guerdon-buoyed, they urged, o'er burning
sands,
Crying with gaunt despair to cloudless skies
(Drouth-calloused skies, bronzed by a savage orb)
For the glad rain-cloud's gentle benison.
Death lay in wait for each succeeding step
In ever-changing form, but foiled, o'ercome,
They journeyed on through tedious weeks of toil,
Till o'er the waste the walls of Zuñi rose
Before their anxious gaze.

Then Cibola
No more was dream, but the awaking hung
A blight, deep-brooding, o'er the souls of those
Whose golden hopes were blackened 'neath the
frown
Of walls of meanly earth, where gilded domes,
Studded with jewels, and rich palaces
In their dream-city in wild riot stood.
Then in derision hot rebuke they hurled
On gentle Marcos, who, gibe-stung, turned back
The patient leagues to far-off Culiacan.

Before the Spanish arms the humble Cibola
Quick fell in conquest. To the north and west
Then journey made a band of dauntless men,
And, finding there a group of villages,
Possession took in Spain's imperial name.
Soon were vast fields accrued to Spain's broad power,
And here and there pushed troops of ardent knights,
Thirsting for conquest and for treasure mad,
Till to the lip of the Bewild'ring Gorge,
Bathed in a flood of half-translucent mists,
In whose far depth a mighty river flowed,
Came Cardenas and his intrepid band.

In Coronado's camp a savage was,
El Turco, from the eastern plains, who fired
Anew the Spanish hopes with earnest tales
Of treasure-lands far to the east, where stood
Majestic cities, gloried with the gold
So blindly coveted. In plenty^c rich,
Before the fancy of the dauntless knights
The far Quivira rose, a wonderland
Where palaces with courts of fretted gold,
Azured with turquoise, lifted up their domes,
Bright in the glory of a golden sun,
High o'er its mural girdle of rare metals.

Led by El Turco, toward the sun new-risen
The knights of Spain their course impatient turned,
In that untraversed empire, as they went,
Building in thought broad cities, gorgeous burning
In the gay glint of riches infinite,
Before whose wondrous majesty e'en swooned
Rebellious fancy. Light of heart were they,
In sweet anticipation groaning bent
With heavy spoil of gold and amethyst.

Counting the tedious miles, complainingless,
On foot toiled Fray Padilla in the van,
His the sweet zeal dark souls to sanctify,
His quest the glory of the Common King.

Across broad tracts of death-inviting wastes,
O'er mountains tipped with sun-disdaining snows
Into the boundless plains where maddened herds
Of shaggy bison, like tumultuous clouds
That slipped their anchors in their skyey seas
And fell to earth, toward far Quivira moved /
The tireless train, though ever patient, still
Impatient for the sense-appalling glow
Of the long search.

Then from the cunning guide,
When e'en impatient patient toil had grown,
Like after days of silent watchfulness
From oracle long dumb, the promise came
That ere another sun its zenith passed
Quivira's domes would blaze upon their sight
In overmastering glory. Passed the sun,
Still stretched the plains in distance infinite,
And 'gainst the faint horizon outlined was
Nor dome nor tower.

Then but another day
Quivira would reveal; but, journeyed on,
The plains grew vaster in their searching gaze.
Another day, and day on weary day,
And still Quivira ever was beyond
The journey of a brief day's gradual passing.

The plains grew dull and long the toilsome miles,
But still allured by the gay city's largess,

In riotous extravagance strewn forth,
Each dawn they journeyed toward the rising sun,
Until, far-traveled, to the humble huts
Of a mean village came — and this Quivira.
Then, sick of heart, in deep dejection turned
They to the west, and the long miles retraced
Back to the empire of the setting sun.

Gold found they none; but, struggling in the dark,
A plenitude of souls the plains revealed
To whom Padilla longed to bring the joy
Of El Señor. Then to Quivira turned
He once again, and through the same dread waste
He journeyed, o'er the same snow-smiling peaks,
Across the same wide tracts that erst had felt
The tread of feet lured by a golden myth.

He went — but came not thence, save that his clay
His loved brown children from Quivira bore
Back to their sweet Isleta, there to rest:
But, restless e'er, in death even as in life,
In hallowed quest dark souls to steep with joy,
Though passed have many generations, still
His body incorruptible uplifts
In punctual time its weight of earthen shield,
And from his sepulture his blessing smiles
On those he loved with an immortal love.

In journey long, in hunger and in thirst,
In heat and cold, in peril and in pain,
And in long watchings, he Quivira found,
Quivira brighter than the fairest dream
Born of the fancy of Spain's cavaliers,
But found it not o'er waste or peak or plain,
But through the shadow of the martyr-tomb.

Kinsmen of God are they who hold it sweet
To love their fellows for their Master's sake;
Scorned the soft unctions whose allurements make
Life's common worm a worldly paraclete,
Through hunger, thirst, contagion, cold, and heat
That love pursuing, even as He, partake
They of Christ's life and love who strive to wake
The fuller man in man but half complete.
And even as He Who, uncomplaining, gave
His life for those He loved, a sacrifice
At their own hands, so do His kinsmen crave,
For love of Him and them, the blessed prize —
Through the dark journey of the martyr-grave —
Of martyr-crown in God's eternal skies.



I HAVE TORN THE BARS ASUNDER

I have torn the bars asunder, I have broken the
chains that bound me;
I have shredded the web wherein the spider of care
had wound me;
And lo, unfettered I come to thee with thy sunlit
glory,
Sweet Land! whose clouds are a song and whose
every stone is a story!

An alien too long was I in the gentle land that bore
me;
My dream-world e'er wert thou, with thy sweet
skies arching o'er me;
The scent of thy pines was mine, their low song and
their sighing,
And the wail of thy desert sands, to the cool palms
ever crying.

Thy white peaks, too, were mine, and the depths of
thy vast abysses,
The roar of thy mountain storms and thy south-
wind's tender kisses;
Thy dusky tribes were mine, and oft in their huts
I found me,
With the smoke of the camp-fire twined like a
phantom-cloud around me.

But now I am thine, sweet Land! who wert ever
mine in my dreaming,
And real are thy golden skies which long were
only seeming:
Ah, banished too long was I from thy plains and
thy mountains hoary,
Whose every cloud is a song and whose every stone
is a story!

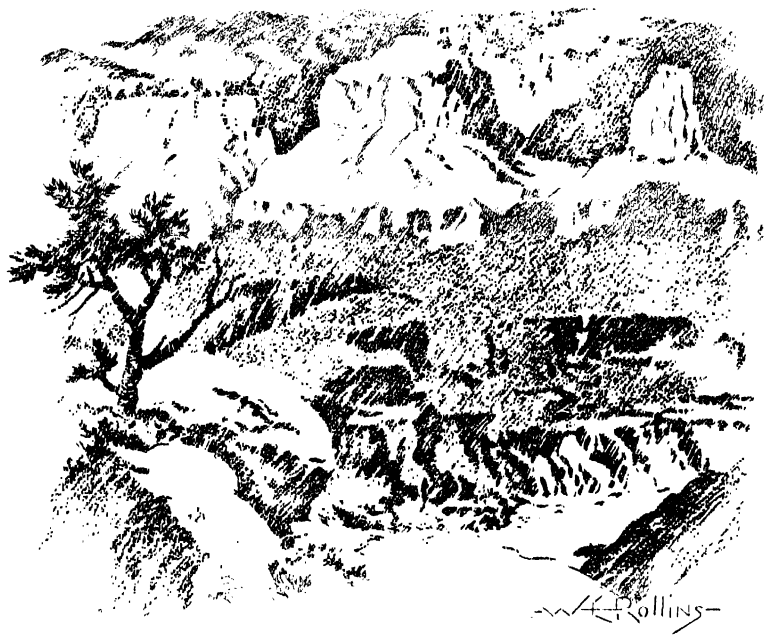


ARIZONA

She led me faint across the sullen blight
Of the warped desert; then these eyes of mine
She touched with life, and lo, incarnadine
Stretched the fair skies o'er joyful valleys, dight
In palm and citrus. Still pursued our flight
Up mountain slopes, through the mysterious pine,
Down to the sculptured deep of her Design
Of Matter singing to Supernal Might.
"These are my realms!" she said: I turned to gaze
On her who, erst unseen, had guided me;
And lo, a child's face, framed in silken hair,
Shone glorious on me, like her skies ablaze
With sunset; but a child still, limbed was she,
Like the young lion in his native lair.

A HOPI PRAYER

Rain! rain!
For the growing grain,
For the high white mesa, the pale wide plain!
To the gods that fly
The clouds in the sky
Child of the Snake Woman, run with our cry!
Rain! rain!
For the thirsting plain,
For the sad, pale melon, the squash, and the grain!
Our prayer in your breast,
Go forth to the west,
The east, south, north, with your soft skin pressed
Down hard on the sand
Of our dry, harsh land,



W. H. Rollins-

*“Down to the sculptured deep of her Design
Of Matter singing to Supernal Might”*

That the gods may see that you bear the brand
Of the woeful need
Of the plant and the seed:
For your tongue will droop and your breast will
 bleed.

Then the gods will know
That the wind should blow
The black clouds up from the far below,
And our prayer and cry,
In your breast that lie,
The gods that whirl the clouds through the sky
Will know are true,
And the rain and the dew
With a hand of fire o'er the plain will strew.
Rain! rain!
For the dying plain:
For the sad, pale melon, the squash, and the grain!

A HOPI PASTORAL

I in the melons and you on the steep
Of the half-barren mesa-slope, trailing your sheep,
Why tarry so long,
And what is your song
Whose sweets to my ear from the brown mesa creep?
"Lō-lomai!
Lō-lomai!
Maid in the melons,
Your dark glossy hair,
Of its arches grown weary,
On your brown shoulders bare
Is yearning to fall, like the sweet summer rain
On the warm glowing sands of the desolate plain!"

I in the melons and you on the steep,
While your love-hallowed notes from the brown
 mesa leap,
Hark to my song,
As you loiter along
Far in the wake of your faint-lowling sheep:
"Lō-lomai!
Lō-lomai!
Youth on the mesa,
Allured by your prayer,
Unwound from its arches,
My dark, flowing hair
O'er my shoulders has dropped, like the slant
 summer rain
That drenches the sands of the broad desert plain!"



THE WEAVER

Subtle
The shuttle,
But subtler the skill of the maiden
Who draweth the train
Of her delicate skein
Through the warp with her long toil laden.

It seemeth
She dreameth,
And into the woof she is twining —
Dark child of the sun —
Her sweet dreams of one
Away o'er the desert sands pining.

Sighing,
And plying
The thread of her long toil-measure,
A vigil she keeps
Down the mesa-steeps
For the bound of her dark heart-pleasure.

Ah, subtle
The shuttle,
But subtler the skill of the maiden
That draweth the train
Of love's bright skein
Through the warp of a life heavy laden.

THE NAVAJO'S WOOING

The winds of the sun am I
And breath of the moon art thou:
I gather the clouds in the sky,
Thou sweepest them back to the brow
Of the mountain, where melted are they
By the delicate joy of thy breath,
And they hide in the passes away,
Lest I summon their spirits to death.

The pine on the mountain am I
And the grass at my feet art thou:
I pierce the cloud in the sky
And its opals drop soft on thy brow;
I sift down a blanket of snow
And drive off the spirits of cold;
And the chiefs of the sun dare not throw
Their shafts through my mantle's deep fold.

Come thou to my lodge, and thy smile
Will burn up its desolate gray:
For afraid are the sun-spirits while
The moon-spirit stayeth away;
And the sun and the cloud-dripping pine
Will gladden the moon and the grass,
And my snow and my rain shall be thine,
And the sheaves of the mists as they pass.

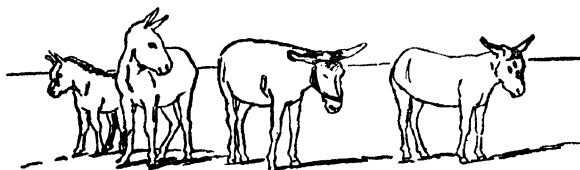
A BROWN MOTHER'S LULLABY

Under the low mesquite,
Sumah! sumah! my sweet!
Hear the laugh of the little ha,
As it runs away from the big en-yah!
When the yah-ma-see and the white el-lah
Have come up behind the great red face,
Han-ne, thy father, will come, my sweet,
With quail from the thicket and deer from the chase.
Under the low mesquite,
Sumah! sumah! my sweet!

Under the low mesquite,
Sumah! sumah! my sweet!
Little brown antelope,, have not a fear —
The prowling maw-ha-ta will not find you here:
He is up on the peaks in the pa-kah, my dear.
When out in the trail creeps the long el-ou-ee,
Han-ne, thy father, will come, my sweet,
With rabbit and turkey for you and for me.
Under the low mesquite,
Sumah! sumah! my sweet!

THE PROSPECTOR

Thy ringing metal let the dull earth feel;
Cleave thou the rock, streaked like the golden morn:
Forth from a touch of thy toil-tempered steel
The busy din of industry is born.



THE PAINTED DESERT

The Sun-god loves thee though the Rain-god hates,
And with sweet witchery on thy sands he plays;
Wide ope he swings his vast cerulean gates,
And, with mysterious colors in his rays,
Pours down his ardent floods that, tide on tide,
In shoreless billows surging infinite,
Fall on thy bubbling cauldron, vision-wide,
In quivering waves of myriad-tinted light.
The Sun-god loves thee, for, with luminous breath,
Expanding wide from his ethereal car,
Thrilling with life thy sullen dunes of death
And with soft touch soothing thy hideous scar,
He, god-like, with strange potency, hath traced
A heaven of beauty on thy hell of waste.

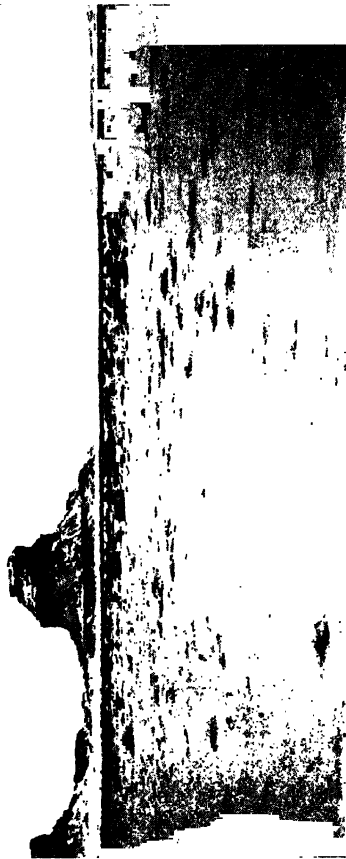
THE DESERT

Impiteous sands, impiteous skies of brass,
One vast in breadth, the other so in height,
In horizontal distance infinite
Meeting! Hath moist-cloud never deigned to pass
Across thee, thirsting sky? Hath never grass,
Lush-sprouted, come in all its glad delight,
Insatiate waste, to soothe thy aching blight
And shame thy spiteful sand-growths, harsh and
crass?

A frown thy answer: yea, a withering frown,
Caught by the skies, borne by the shifting sand
From ocotillas, ghosts of fiendish joy,
Up to the great saguaros (looking down
Upon a bleaching skeleton) that stand
Like ruined columns 'mid the piles of Troy.

THE MIRAGE

The Lady of the Desert, spirit-fair,
Now soft allures me with her witchery;
O'er the hot sand-waste she enticeth me,
Pointing the mimic grove and saying, "There
The cool arroya waits." Across the bare,
Sun-blistered desert where abideth she
My feet are wooed by her sweet travesty,
Till, journeyed far, she whispers faint, "Beware!"
Then, with a mocking laugh, she blinds mine eyes,
And naught behold I save the dulling span;
Across my path the wind-flung sand-rain flies,
Harsh beating 'gainst my thirsting caravan;
And where was erst her greening paradise
The desert stretches far as eye may scan.



"The desert stretches far as eye may scan."

DEAD ON THE DESERT

“Have mercy, God!” and on the dune sun-curs’d
He fell, his gourd crushed in his shrunken hand;
Yet in the anguish of consuming thirst
His purple lips touched but the burning sand.
The spiteful sun, mocking his feeble cry,
Drank his red sap as from its solstice-throne
It slow dropped down behind the western sky,
Leaving him there on the wide waste — alone!
Alone? Nay, for the slimy lizard crept
Across his blistered flesh; and soon the long
Thin serpent came, and, coiling where he slept,
Hissed in his ear and sang its deadly song;
While harsh the wind made sport against his cheek
And starved coyotes answered shriek on shriek.



THE GRAND CAÑON

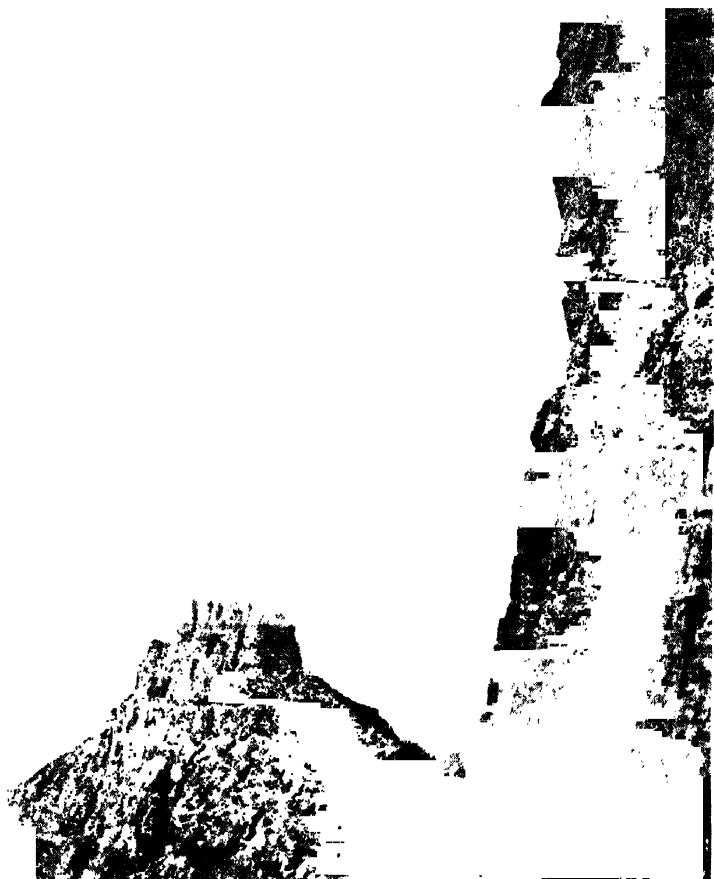
God said:

"Earth, child of My will,
That spinnest the web of Time
And weavest thereof the warp and the woof of Life,
A city I would have for thee,
With a palace and throne of infinite splendor,
Whither shall come, when ended thy long toil-
plødding,
I and My hosts and My legions
To judge of thy fabric.

"Time I have made thy master —
Time who sheareth the flocks for the web whereof
 thou spinnest and weavest —
And him I commission My architect,
Who, with his servants, the artisan-elements,
Out of thy noblest matter,
Thy granite and onyx and bronze,
Thy gold and thy silver,
Shall build the city,
The throne and the palace,
For the ultimate coming
Of thy King and thy Master Eternal."

Saying, He dreamed.

Time, stealing up to the gates of Eternity,
Saw not within,
But near,
Of the Dream caught from beyond
An atom-breath,
Saw an atom-gleam,
Heard an atom-measure.



“ In the midst of the throne of the King

Then, from God's otherland turning,
Straight unto earth he whirled,
And, all about him the artisan-elements calling,
Bade them to hew and to carve and to build.

Counting each punctual moment with patient
precision,
Through ages of eons they hewed and they carved
and they builded —
Time and his servants —
Slow working
Out of a chaos of matter
The design of the city,
The throne and the palace,
Caught in an atom-breath,
An atom-ray,
An atom-sound,
From an Infinite Dream.

Vast temples of onyx and gold,
Vast courts of bronze and of silver,
Vast palaces many,
Embrasures, battlements, ramparts,
Minarets, pinnacles, towers,
And walls of enduring granite,
In the midst the Throne of the King,
They hewed and they carved and they builded,
Till out of their toil came the Wonderful City,
Vast as ^{an} empire.

Then rested
Time and his servants,
The artisan-elements.

God saw and smiled;
And over the City Mysterious,
The City of Glory,
From His countenance fell
A miracle of light and of mists,
Of color and glow,
And He said:
"It is well!"

OAK CREEK

Stream of the mystic, wild and sweet,
Shut in by thy enduring walls,
Lo, now thy witchery lures my feet
To thy still pools and spray-white falls.

A thrill of earth is on thy breast,
A touch of heaven is in thy song,
And all the joys the soul loves best
Within thee and about thee throng.

I hear a reed-voice through thy trees:
Methinks mute, sylvan Pan awakes
And his mad votive melodies
Forth from his pipe mellifluous shakes.

But 'tis not Pan; I walk in dream;
It is thy wave and ripple-ring,
Leaping from shade to shivered gleam,
Sweet brook! that the lilt-measure sing.

And while my soul the wild notes thrill,
I mark thy awful might, O stream,
That hewed the cloven walls until
Out of chaos thy sculptured dream

Came forth a waking paradise,
On whose each separate atom-wing
To God's unchanging Beauty flies
Creation's votive offering.

ANGLING

The waterfall sang above
In a resonant•baritone;
The white shoals fretted below,
Flute-voiced, o'er pebble and stone;
A brown thrush spilled his song
Through the leaves of the sycamore,
And a mock-bird mimicked and teased
From the bush on the covert shore.

The broad pool lay at my feet
In the depths of the tranquil wild,
As calm as nun's white soul,
"As clear as the thoughts of a child."
Out floated my gossamer line,
Unfolding swift coil on coil,
As light as a maiden's will,
As eager as love for spoil.

The white fly dimpled the pool,
A shiver of silver flame —
As true as an arrow-shot —
From a nook mysterious came;
A quiver, a shock, and a thrill
Swift ran from rapids to shoal,
Through line to the bow-bent rod,
Through hand to my very soul.

And the glory of conquest rose
Soon out of the troubled stream,
For real from the Elfin Chance
I had snatched his silver dream.
So real from the hearts of men
We may draw full many a prize,
For who may know the pleasure-thrills
That out of the depths may rise ?

IN SOLITUDE

Here let me by the limpid stream
Court Solitude, where noisy mart
Finds no response, but the pure art
Of Nature has its reign supreme.
Far from the mad world's stern decrees
A panting fugitive I fly,
While wan Care, with her haggard eye,
Who dogged me long, shrinks, turns, and flees.

And lo! from every nook appear
A myriad Fancies: light of wing
And fleet of foot they come, and bring
The ghosts of many a vanished year.
I frown not, though their nimble feet
Bring forth the satyr and the faun
To sport across the woodland lawn
And dance upon its emerald sheet.

Here Melancholy sits, sweet maid
Of pallid brow and flowing hair;
The wood-nymphs found her in her lair
And dragged her hither, half afraid,
Half shrinking, for the satyrs dance
In glee before her drooping eyes,
And though her pale lips part with sighs,
Their revel drowns her utterance.

Afar off, down the mystic vale
A reed-voice cometh; from the stream
The god Pan snatched it, and the dream
Of mellow sound that steeps the gale
Takes form, and lo! a lovely maid —
The pensive Muse — comes forth and lives,
And while to Song her soul she gives,
Sits dreaming in the somber shade.

The gods have heard: they come, and prone
They cast them at her feet; then bear
Her to the sun-tipped peak, and there
They place her on a golden throne.
She smiles; and bard and poet throng
With wild harp to her feet, and pour
Their rhapsodies of love and war
In one unbroken burst of song

Upon the madly throbbing air.
But why, sweet heavenly Muse, rejoice?
Too soon the arch-angelic Voice
Shall falter at the touch of Care,
Shall cringe at Mammon's throne, and creep
A groveling worm. Alas, too soon
Thy fair Parnassus shall be strewn
With rankling weeds from base to steep,

And heavenly sweets of sound and song
That flood the cloud-protruding peak
Shall drown beneath the stench and shriek
Of gluttoned vulture-beasts that throng
The carcass of dead Art. And lo,
The clamorous shouts and war's alarms,
And clash and crash of Trojan arms
Grow faint and fainter. Lost the glow

Of Orpheus' lyre, that made its slave
The dumb of Nature. Broken lies
The oaten stop, while yonder flies,
In haste, Silenus to his cave.
And he who did the realm explore
Infernal, lifting from its throng
Of damnèd fiends, a heaven-lit song,
Seeks his accustomed way no more.

Apollo's lute is stilled; the hair
Is trailing loose; and the sublime
Full Voice that soared in God's own clime
Is lost upon the stifling air.
Sluggish the Avon's flow; the roar
Of wild Materialism's tide
O'erwhelms th' immortal Voice that sighed
And sang upon its shelving shore.

And lo! upon Parnassus' slope
A myriad pigmies strive to climb;
The sweet narcissus and the thyme
They wound and crush as wild they grope,
With eyes benighted, up the steeps:
They falter, fall; and at the base,
With anguished voice and ghastly face,
Implore the goddess as she sleeps

Upon the summit. Is it sleep?
Or is it death? If sleep, oh, haste
The hour of waking! Let us taste
Once more from out the hallowed deep
Of thy sweet cup the nectar'd draught
Which made the very gods with joy
Inebriate! Awake: destroy
With thy all-withering scorn the craft

And trade that barter in thy name
The black, distorted infamies
From which hell's shameless legate flies,
Unused to such degree of shame!
Awake! dispel the hideous dream!
Cast off the nightmare that has bound
Thee in its chains of darkness! Sound
Thy dulcet-string, and let the gleam

Of thy sweet eyes shine forth again
Amid the waste, that heaven may come
Once more to earth, and drive the gloom
And damp from out thy sacred fane!
Awake! behold the leaden sky,
O'erspread with mists! Touch but thy string,
And monstrous glooms must all take wing
Before thy melting melody!

She waketh not: her sacred lyre
Responds no more! It is not sleep!
Sweet Muse! — For o'er yon golden steep
The famished vulture marks his gyre;
The gaunt she-wolf, with skulking tread,
Comes forth her ghastly prey to seek,
And with long howl and hideous shriek,
She tears the entrails from the dead

To make her ghoulish feast, the while
The vulture swoops upon his prey
And holds mad revel. Woe the day
When foul infection warped the smile
Which wrapped those steeps in heaven-lit skies,
And filled with such celestial hymn
The slopes, it drew the cherubim,
Mistaking earth for paradise!

And yet, methinks the vulture-beast
But feeds upon corporeal parts;
The spirit lives; the God of Arts
Looks down upon th' unholy feast
From His starlitten fields, and weeps;
For there, far o'er Parnassus' height,
In Splendor Beatific dight,
He holds His reign; nor dies, nor sleeps,

But breathes into the glowing soul
The fires of His own symphony,
And bears her up that she may see
The Source Divine, and catch the roll
Of heavenly harmonies, and hear
The notes eternal wing their flight
Majestic through Elysian light
From farthest orb to farthest sphere.

There rules the Destiny of Song,
And guides the faltering wings to rise
Through the vast blue expanse of skies,
And opes the lips that full and strong
Breathe forth the choral strains that roll
Reverberant on ethereal shores:
'Tis God's own hand; 'tis His that pours
The heavenly essence in the soul,

And lips ordains with seething fires
To rise o'er Splendor's steeps and sing,
And hands anoints to smite the string
In union with celestial choirs.
O Muse Divine! Eternal Muse!
If but the craven bird and beast
On yonder Mount make ghastly feast
Of Thy fair prototype, diffuse

Into our barren souls a breath
Of Thy eternal hymn, all pure,
All sweet, that then we may endure
Stern life, forgetting death is death.
Song is not dead! Throw off the pall!
He lives who taught the bard to sing
And gave his soul the silken wing
To soar in realms ethereal;

And gave him ear to catch the flight
Of His celestial strains, and eyes
To pierce the blue of azured skies
And gaze upon Elysium's light.
Song is not dead: God lives, and He
Is all of Song and all of Art,
Who breathes into the throbbing heart
The fires of His divinity.

It is the world gone mad: and blind
To the One Beautiful, she gropes
In darkness up Parnassus' slopes,
And, faltering, falls. O Muse, all kind!
Give her but sight that she may see,
Give her but sound that she may hear,
And make her strong to do and bear
That she may scale the heights to Thee!

But she will not! And lo, the night
Comes on without a twilight; hoarse
Bloweth the wind; the river's course
Obscures in mists; a palling blight
O'erhangs the fading Mount; nor sound
Of pastoral reed nor shepherd's note
Is heard, nor heavy thyme-scents float
Adown the vale; but the lean hound

Bays at the feverish moon; and Woe,
Gaunt-cheeked and hollow-eyed, and torn
Her hair, comes forth to weep and mourn
And pour her tears in silence. Grow
The dense shadows denser. I strive
For utterance; I moan; I sigh;
But through the mists can only cry,
With trembling voice, "Forgive! Forgive!"

THE DEAD CITY

Tomb of a vanished race; sepulchral aisles;
Sarcophagus in which the pomps and powers
Of a dead age are locked eternal; piles
Of ruined toil; lone courts; slow-crumbling towers,—

Vocal, yet voiceless! All about ye falls
The half-hushed echo of strange tongues that prate
Of your deep mysteries: but within your walls
Walk your white ghosts dumb and disconsolate.

THE CLIFF DWELLER

In riddle speak thy ruined walls to me:
They tell of thee who in thy sheer abode,
Like eagle's nest, with instincts fresh from God,
Sought'st refuge here from thy fierce enemy;
And then they say thou camest because in thee
Dwelt that superior love for His wild steeps
Which in the simple child of nature leaps
Above the grosser instincts longingly.
Yet hath no hand unraveled the long skein
Of thy vague past. 'Tis well: so let it lie
A slave to Mutability, whose reign
Hath strewn the world with ruins far and nigh,
Even in thy narrow streets, thy walls of stone,
As in Persepolis on her mountain throne.



"A house fallen to ruin"

AN ABANDONED PLACE

A field all fallow:

Sedge and the cockle grown wild o'er the way;
The riotous thistle and weeds
Glutting the soil with their seeds;
The gaunt lynx seeking her hapless prey;
The loathed toad and unclean
Dwelling the reeds among;
And the water-snake, darting its forkèd tongue
Out of the pond with its scum of green.

A house fallen to ruin:

The roof caved in, the gables burst out:
The windows broken, the lawn unmown;
A fence neglected with weeds o'ergrown;
Vines running mad all round about;
The half-wild swine, 'amished and lean,
Housed on the wet-warped floor,
Where oft in the gay dance gliding o'er,
Dainty feet, proud feet have been.

Art thou the field all fallow?

Art thou the house all ruin?

O my heart! O my soul!

Lest it be, beware!

Lest it be, prepare!

With plow and blade make thy glebe all fair;

And thy house make whole

With the tools God gives — as sharp and true

As ever a skilful workman knew —

And ruin and riot and rank decay

Shall steal like the coward wolf away,

Finding a master there.

CASA GRANDE

Could mine eyes pierce thy mural mystery,
What pomp departed might they then behold?
A blazoned throne in a vast court of gold
Where jeweled empress sate, enchanting thee
With her dark beauty, and the reverent knee
Of swarthy knight, touching her sacred floor —
Is this thy past? Or did thy massive door
Shut in the frown of some hewn diety?
Thou answerest not, Sphinx of forgotten age!
Thy halls are dumb, and dumb thy ruined piles;
And while thy secret in thy crumbling towers
Is locked eternal, lo, in piteous rage
The Spirit of Decay shrieks through thine aisles,
And in thy courts the ghost of vanished powers!

SAN XAVIER DEL BAC

I look upon thee, and, as in a glass,
I see reflected in thy walls antique
The age that was; and gentle Kino, meek
In saintly fervor, sings his holy Mass
Upon thy desert sands. Then gradual pass
Thy swart, bronz'd artisans, slow shaping thee,
Till lifts thy miracle of majesty
Out of the toil of their broad hands of brass.
Now in thy vaulted nave, where subtile skill
Of sainted hands hath left inheritance,
I kneel with thy dark children, and a thrill
Of holy awe hangs o'er, like the hushed trance
That bows the pilgrim when alone he stands
'Mid the vast piles that strew the Theban sands.



"The ruined mission"

THE RUINED MISSION

O'er the husks of thy gloried reign
The shifting sand dunes gather:
But deep lies the golden grain
In the bins of the Harvest Father.

THE STAMPEDE

Wrapped in our blankets we lay that night
At the marge of the desert brown,
Watching the ghostly stars come up
And watching the stars go down.
We told our tales and we sang our songs
As the night-breeze rose and fell;
And the "clock-stars" told it was middle night
Ere we turned into sleep's corral.

Our rest was sweet, for the night was still,
Save the sound of the clanking chain
Of our tired caballos, hopped near,
And a lone owl's weird refrain;
Still save these and the muffled sounds
That rose from the sleeping herd,
And a lean coyote's distant yell,
And the leaves that the night-wind stirred.

But our dreams were brief, for out on the hush
That shrouded our wild retreat
There rose the voice of the bellowing herd
And the rush of a myriad feet.
Was it the freak of a locoed steer,
Or the lean coyote's yell?
Or was it the voice of the lonely owl?
Or a cottonwood leaf that fell?

Quien sabe? But there like a living storm
They swayed o'er the desert sands,
And we argued not what the cause might be
When the call rang out, "All hands!"
With ready bits to our steeds we sprung,
And, cinching the leathern gird,
We loosed the hobbles and whirled away
In the wake of the maddened herd.

O'er the yielding sand to the rear we plunged,
Then swung out over the plain,
And down the line of that seething flesh
We swept like a hurricane.
The cactus fell at touch of the herd
And crushed was the low mesquite,
And the sharp mescal was ground to dust
By the blows of its angry feet.

Ho! how we shouted! and one wild voice
Rang loud o'er the desert sand —
The same dread voice that the steer had heard
When he felt the sting of the brand;
The same that woke when over his horn
The long, lithe reata fell —
The voice that in the rodeo-time
Had curdled his blood with its yell.

Oh, how they writhed and quivered and quailed
When that wild, shrill voice rang out!
And the long line wavered, the dense ranks broke
'Neath the sting of that terrible shout:
But the mad herd closed up its ragged lines
As it whirled o'er the desert plain,
And the air was filled with the turbulent sand
Till it fell o'er the waste like rain.

Up to the head of the great, black cloud
We plunged where the leader ran;
And then with an oath and a shout and a song
The perilous mill began.
The leader fell, and a leader sprang
To the fore o'er the fallen steer,
And the quivering carcass was torn to shreds
By the galloping feet in the rear.

We whirled them round in a long, wild sweep,
And, just at the break of day,
We swung them in at the desert's edge
Where the grass-green valley lay;
And quiet came to the panting herd
With the touch of the morning light:
And the boys — God knew what their peril was,
And He guarded them well that night.

THE DYING ANTELOPE

Thy quivering flesh rebukes me, and thine eyes,
Melting with piteous pleading, seek the hand
That found thy life in quest of vulgar prize
And ruthless tore thee from thy timid band;
And yet in vain thy pleadings: impotent
To give thee back that which it snatched from thee,
The hand that deft the craven missile sent
Now feeble swoons and trembles helplessly.
Could I recall the keen lead's bitter sting
And wake thy sinewed limb to life again,
Or bid with sorcerous touch the wild flood sing
In living measure through thy clogging vein,
I could forgive the wretched hand that smote
Thy joyous chord with death's dull, wavering note.

THE SONG OF THE PINES

When the long array of shadows
Had vanquished the hosts of light,
I saw the purple evening
Swoon into the arms of night;

And a sob crept through the forest —
A low sob, choked with tears,
Like the grief of a mother-nation
O'er her war-slain children's biers.

Then came a note of wailing
That echoed from pine to pine
Till it rose in the measured choral
Of a solemn dirge divine.

It swelled to the mist-veiled mountain,
It sank to the fallow plain,
Till the great pines throbbed with sorrow
For the vanquished hosts and the slain.

The soft winds came to soothe them
And the sweet dew brought them balm,
But far too deep was their anguish
For a tender kiss to calm.

The notes of their lamentations
Grew deep and full and strong,
Till it seemed that the far skies echoed
The strains of their mournful song.

Then I heard a voice in the forest
That the whole world seemed to thrill,
And full o'er the plaintive measures
It cried out: "Peace! Be still!

"The vanquished shall give new battle
And the dead shall live again;
And over the hosts of darkness
The Prince of Light shall reign!"

'Twas God's own voice in the forest,
And lo, even as he spake,
In the east I saw the Archer
His myriad troops awake;

And, in his high car whirling,
In his radiant robes of might,
He hurled on the fleeing shadows
His glorious hosts of light.

Then the great pines calmed their sorrow;
But a low sob, half a sigh,
Crept out of the heart of the forest
Ere she saw the Day-god nigh.

In a pine for a while it lingered,
Then rose to a tender song
That swelled to majestic measure,
Till an anthem, full and strong,

From pine to tall pine sweeping,
To their sorrow brought surcease;
Then it sank to a gentle murmur
Whose one note echoed, "*Peace!*"

A FOREST LULLABY

Nestled close to my mother-pine,
In an undertone that is half a sigh
She sings to me in her soft, sweet tongue,
The tender strains of a lullaby.
I watch the stars as they journey on
Across the limitless breadth of skies,
Till my mother-pine bends low her arms
And shuts them out from my drooping eyes.

And then, as close to her feet I lie,
Low bending over her pilgrim child,
(While far in the wood the mountain wind
Waketh his long notes, weird and wild)
My mother-pine, in her strange, sweet tongue,
With half a wail in her cadence deep,
Lulls me to rest as gently she sings,
"Sleep! sleep! my pilgrim child, oh, sleep!"

CAPTAIN WILLIAM O. O'NEILL

The trumpet of war resounded
Its long blast through the land,
And the slumbering fires of the people
To a tempest of flame were fanned.

And then, as the shrill note sounded
High over the war's alarms,
Out rang the voice of the Nation:
"My children! to arms! to arms!"

Far in the west, expectant,
A son of the Nation stood,
And a torrent of untamed valor
Ran wild in his Celtic blood.

He heard the call of his country,
And, the first her call to obey,
He had girded his sword about him
Ere the long blast died away.

Then, buoyant with hope and eager,
To the furnace of war he fled,
And into its flame and its thunder
His valorous hosts he led.

Through the crash and the storm of battle
They bore on the ranks of Spain,
And the lines of the foemen wavered
'Neath the scourge of their terrible rain.

With a shout and a song and a volley
They plunged through the seething hell,
But first in the shock of battle
The prince of the valiants fell.

He fell, but his stalwart comrades,
From forest and ranch and plain,
Swept on to the foeman's ramparts
Like the whirl of a hurricane —

Swept on with resistless valor,
Till, joyous and wild and strong,
Down the slope of San Juan echoed
The notes of their triumph-son.

He fell, but a glory gathered
On his brow, and a glory came
And over his low grave rested
And hallowed his Celtic name:

The glory the sweet land giveth
Her valiant sons who lie
Asleep with the blest immortals
“Who were not born to die!”

A TRIBUTE TO WASHINGTON

A voice like a turbulent tempest
Rose up from the West World new;
At first 'twas a tremulous whisper,
But it grew and it swelled and it grew,
Till over the deep it thundered,
Sped on by a West World gale,
And it made an empire tremble
And the cheeks of a king grow pale.

For it said: “We are tired of bondage
To a monarch over the sea;
Our hearts are the hearts of freemen,
And our loved land must be free;
We will none of a tyrant's scepter,
But will build us a goodly state
Where 'none shall rule but the humble,'
And the lowly shall be great!”

Then forth from a myriad scabbards
Flashed a myriad swords in the light
That burst with the dawning of freedom
O'er the gloom of the sullen night;
And the hands that had rent their shackles
Leaped up with the gleaming swords,
And the steel of freemen glistened
In the ranks of the tyrant's hordes.

But they trembled at thought of their weakness,
And the hopes in their breasts grew dark;
And they yearned for the sword's unsheathing
That would touch at the quivering spark
Of hope that was not yet smothered;
When lo! like the gleaming sun
Thats bursts o'er a lingering darkness,
Flashed the sword of Washington!

Oh, sword of the New World Spartan,
That gleamed in the dawning light
That came with the birth of freedom
And struck at the tyrant's might,
And, cheering the hopes that wavered,
Led the conquering armies on —
To thee bow a grateful people,
O sword of Washington!

In the feverish heat of the battle,
In the cheerless cold of the camp,
Where the hearts of the bravest faltered,
In the march's weary tramp,
That sword cheered the ragged heroes,
Till over the wintry sea
They drove the tyrant's minions —
And the land of the West was free!

Then up rose a grateful people,
And they brought him a signet ring,
And they cried: "All hail to the monarch!
Washington shall be king!"
But he said: "I would have no scepter;
Let us build us a goodly state,
Where 'none shall rule but the humble,'
And the lowly shall be great."

Peace spread o'er the land her pinions,
And out of the glorious West
Arose the New World nation,
With virtue and liberty blest.
They bowed to no tyrant's scepter,
But they builded a goodly state,
Where "none shall rule but the humble,"
And the lowly shall be great.

MOB-FURY

Infernal Rage, that killest in Justice' name,
Her bench usurping, and with perjured hand
Holding her sacred scales: shall this sweet land
Rise never above thy black, rapacious shame?
Thy savage deeds glow scarlet with hell's flame,
And in thy murderous soul lay bare the brand
Of foul hypocrisy: for thou darest stand
Before thy God and pure intent proclaim.
How long in servile impotence, O State,
Wilt groan beneath these monstrous infamies,
Thine own power mocking? Lift thee up! Be brave!
Thy laws make strong and prompt to operate,
Swift in their course with him who law defies,
And show the world thou'rt not the Rabble's slave!

THOUGHT'S INFINITY

Dense night and the broad earth! The one devours
The other's vastness. Thought, unbridled, flies
Pulsing from these to the immenser skies,
And leaps to space, where through the solemn hours
Majestic stars glide chorusing to stars,
System to system, while strange harmonies,
Order to wondrous order singing, rise:
And yet, can space confine Thought's subtle
powers?

Not so: for lo, beyond the pale of place
Rapid and free it takes its eager flight,
Out-tops the finite, mutable and base,
The dimming suns, the fading stellar light,
And, mounting o'er th' immensity of space,
Bows down at last before the Infinite.

UNREST

Desire is in the mind,
I go, I seek, I find:
But e'er a new desire
Comes, urging farther, higher.

GOD-SEEKING

I seek Him through sun and shadows,
Through the mystic shadows,
Over the meadows,
Through marish and fallow,
When evening comes and still is the voice of the
marts:
For Him my soul hungers and thirsts and longs
and starts
To fly away like the swift-winged swallow,
But it flutters to earth again, for my soul is callow,
callow!

Ah, in the twilight,
In the mystic twilight,
Some time — the sky bright
With rays refracted —
Ere the intangible darkness shall blind mine eyes,
I will find Him, and in yonder Elysian skies,
Full-fledged with the sweet grace He giveth,
My soul shall fly away where He forever liveth!



IF THIS WERE ALL OF LIFE

If this were all of life — youth ever flying,
Unceasing toil, unending pain, the tears,
The anguished woes, the heartbreaks, the swift
years

With their great loads of sinning, wailing, sighing,
The blasted hopes, the dark despair, the trying
For objects ne'er attained, the shrinking fears,
The famine, cold, the ribald laugh, the jeers,
The ghastly dead, the struggles of the dying:
If this were all of life — O thou Desire
For the One Good which art most manifest
Of the insatiate yearnings in my breast,
I'd crush and tear and purge thee out with fire,
I'd plunge me from the eyrie crags on high,
And, craven beast, would will me but to die.

THE SOUL AND THE STAR

The Soul looked up at the Star —
Bright Star! in the summer night,
With his flaming hair from his shoulders bare
Blown back in his boundless flight.
The Star looked down from the heavens
And called through the crumbling space:
The Soul leaped high o'er the arching sky,
And the two stood face to face.

The Star oped his glowing heart —
Warm heart! whose vermeil tide
Ran screaming through his veins of blue
And glowed o'er his face full wide.
They spake not one to the other,
But stood in their dumb amaze,
Each awed with each, though a surge of speech
Swelled turbulent 'neath their gaze.

The heavens rocked with the orbs—
Great orbs! as they dipped anear
And their anthems sung in celestial tongue
To the Soul's uplifted ear.
Out swung the Star in his orbit
Past the ultimate zone of place,
And, "*Come!*" he cried; and, the Soul by his side,
He swayed through the vasty space.

And the Soul spake thus to the Star:
"Fair Star! in the infinite sky!
By thy glowing side I have longed to abide —
Oh, would that a star were I!
Behold, ere my days are many,
I am dulled with the salt of tears;
But thou shinest young, though behind thee is flung
The wake of a billion years!"

And the Star spake thus to the Soul:
"Sweet Soul! I live but a day:
I live — and I die — in the infinite sky,
But *thou* livest on alway.
Though the years of thy youth have seared thee,
I would that thy lot were mine:
Thy life lies before — and one soul is more
Than all of the stars that shine.

“Thou beholdest the burning sun —
Great sun! shining garishly;
But the sun is a sun till the world is done, —
And, after that, what care we?
And the starlight fades in the heavens
And the seatide dies on the shore,
But the Soul lives on when the world is gone
And the Star is a star no more!”

The Soul fell back to earth —
Dull earth! where the dull abide;
Then again to the Star she leaped afar,
And, “Star! fair Star!” she cried:
But a dead sphere swung in his orbit
And the star-dust drifted o’er—
For the Soul lived on when the stars were gone
And the world was a world no more.

O WANDERING PILGRIM

O wandering pilgrim, through tempest and cold
Thou gropest in darkness o’er marish and wold;
Thou strayest with feet all aweary and sore
Where bleak are the skies and the heather is frore;
With thorn thou art wounded, with famine art pale,
And torn is thy cloak by the pitiless gale.
Dost seek on the moor and the heath’s fallow breast
A balm for thy wounds, for thy tired spirit rest?
O wanderer, lo, how the moorland is drear:
Thy haven of peace is not here—is not here.

O wandering pilgrim, yon shines a bright Star
Through darkness and gloom o’er the mountains
afar!

Look up: let thine eyes from the Light never stray
But, steadfast as it, go thou hence on thy way.
That Star be thy guide through the desolate night —
Go thou from the lowland to yon golden height,
Where foot never falters and heart never bleeds,
But sweet smile the skies on its emerald meads.
O wanderer, lo, how the uplands are fair!
Thy haven of rest, it is there — it is there!

THE PRICELESS GIFT

If He, who all good gifts bequeaths, should say:
“Thou art my favored child: speak thou thy will;
At thy command are all the boons which thrill
The mortal bosom: honor, power to sway
Men’s hearts with speech, a crown, a scepter — yea
Riches beyond compare, love, matchless skill
In subtile arts, wisdom increasing till
The world shall crown thee with th’ immortal bay:”
Unto the which I would give answer: “Soon
Dissolve the powers which we do homage. Naught
Of crowns be mine and none of wisdom, save
To know Thee and Thy boundless good. I crave
Of all Thy priceless gifts but this one boon —
The grace, dear God! to love Thee as I ought!”

A PURE SOUL

Oft I have yearned that with material eyes
An immaterial soul I might behold,
Holy and pure, with graces manifold,
Bound unto earth, but longing thence to rise
On wings untethered through th' ethereal skies
From its own chords of heaven-tempered gold
Unto its glorious Object clear and bold
Pouring the measures of its symphonies:
And yet, methinks, in God's own image made,
So wondrous its divine-reflected light,
That, as the glooms before the sunshine fade,
Were sense corrupt to meet so fair a sight,
Perish must I before that soul, arrayed
In the warm splendors of the Infinite!

SOUL JOURNEYINGS

Sometimes this gay sense-mansion I abjure,
(Saith thus the Soul) athirst for other sweets
Than those mine eye within this dwelling meets;
And, leaping up, plumed for the wing secure,
Eager, expansive, buoyant, subtle, vast,
I gain the presence of Celestial Light:
But, being gained, upon that awful sight
I, shamed with imperfections, look aghast.
Then Beauty's flame, meseems, doth burn mine eye
And scorch my wing, purging the earthy dross
That clingeth to my substance; and I fly
That Presence lest I perish, being gross,
And fall I back these earthly walls to fill,
Panting and faint, and yet more eager still.

THE SOUL'S PROGRESS

Methought I died: and from its keep set free,
My eager soul swept into Paradise.
There saw I God, and God my spirit's eyes
Did contemplate, and all in full degree
Her gloried faculties. Him did I see,
Even as He is, enthronèd in the skies,
Eternal, vast, omnipotent, most wise,
And all His radiant Light environed me.
Nearer I drew: and straight, without desire —
Even as the seed light findeth, being sown —
Each new beholding some new wisdom bore;
But though in endless progress high and higher
Clomb I in wisdom toward God's beauteous throne,
He grew the glorious Mystery the more.

THE CHRISTMAS HYMN

Down through the cold, bleak valley
A pilgrim walked — alone;
But the wind came up to greet him,
And a tremulous star that shone
The loveliest and the fairest
Amid the orbs of night,
Sent down a gleam to cheer him
And to pave his way with light.

Around, the glinting snow-dunes
Stretched in their cold embrace,
And the eddying crystals drifted
Up his thin, pinched face;
He close drew his cloak about him,
But the fiends of the gale danced near,
And they clutched at his rags in their revel
And hissed in his frightened ear.

“Oh, woe is me!” he muttered,
And his thin lips moved in prayer —
Lips that had long been silent
To aught save a soul’s despair.
“But, courage, faint heart!” he murmured,
“And, strength, weak limbs!” he cried;
“For I draw me near the cloister
Where the holy monks abide.

“Once I, in cowl and habit,
Prayed in the convent cell,
And the grace of God was with me
Till I harked to a voice of hell:
I rose from my couch while the convent
Was wrapped in its holy sleep,
And, stealing forth in the midnight,
Went far from its hallowed keep.

“All up and down I have wandered
The ways and the haunts of men,
Till my soul is sick with sinning
And it longs for peace again.
I come, with a heart all burdened,
To fall at Thy holy shrine,
And again I would say, sweet Master,
I am Thine — I am Thine — I am Thine!”

His voice grew faint and fainter,
And his palsied step grew slow;
While fierce howled the gale about him
And deep piled the drifting snow.
“Help — me — God!” and he staggered
As he lifted his voice in prayer;
But his wail was of one faint crying
In the wilderness of despair.

A step — a moan — a struggle,
And he sank on the blasted wold;
And a stealing sleep came o’er him,
Banishing pain and cold.
All still — all still — all quiet,
And the winds bore the snowdrifts near;
When, up from the valley wafted,
A faint sound, sweet and clear,

Fell on his struggling spirit
Like a calm on a troubled sea,
And swelled from a drowsy echo
To a wondrous melody.
’Twas the midnight Mass; and the fathers,
In the convent chapel dim,
Round the lowly crib were gathered,
Chanting a Christmas hymn.

“The monks! the monks!” he faltered,
As, borne on the wings of night,
Came up the song from the convent;
“The monks! the monks! and the light
That yonder shines in the valley,
Though mine eyes but see it dim,
Is the beacon-star of the cloister
Whence cometh the Christmas hymn.

“Help — me — God!” and he lifted
His wasted form from the ground;
And the gale swept by unheeded
As the narrow path he found.
“I am coming soon,” he muttered,
“Though faint is thy beacon-light,
I come, good Father Prior,
To join in thy hymn to-night!”

Up, up to the leaden heavens
He lifted his glassy eyes,
And the one fair star looked on him
From the depths of the wintry skies.
Down the heavy way he bore him
To the convent gray and grim,
While sweeter and fuller and stronger
Grew the strains of the Christmas hymn.

“Again, again!” he whispered,
“I am Thine, my Master, Thine!
Once more to Thy bosom take me,
And Thy will shall e’er be mine!
I come, good Brother Porter!
Though my heart is black with sin,
Let the convent gate swing open,
Let the wandering pilgrim in!

"I come! I come!" and he tottered
Up to the massive gate,
And his hand was upon the knocker:
But it fell like a leaden weight,
While forth from the convent chapel
Crept the joyous strains again,
And he sank on the cold, white granite
As they sang, "Amen! Amen!"

'Twas there that the good monks found him
On that Christmas morn — alone;
With a snow-shroud wound about him,
His lips to the convent stone.
The novices, praying o'er him,
Asked, "Who can it be? ah, who?"
But the gray old Father Prior,
He knew — he knew — he knew.



THE NATIVITY

I

My flocks were safe within their wonted keep,
When in the East I saw rise up a Star —
Most wondrous Star! and felt the midnight hour,
Throbbing with peace, in bliss exultant steep
The world, and heard majestic chorals sweep
With sound the joyous universe as far
As the soul's sense could reach: as though some
power
Of dream were on, without the power of Sleep.
I started from my wakeful watch, and bore
Me forth: a hand reached down (though by mine
eyes
Unseen, intangible but felt) and o'er
Judea's hills, beneath the arching skies,
It led me on, nor me released until
I stood within a beast's mean domicile.

II

I paused beside the lowly manger where
An Infant lay, newborn, upon the straw,
In swaddling garments wrapped. Anear I saw
The Wise Men prone in heaven-ascending prayer.
I looked, and lo! the Child was wondrous fair,
August, serene: I felt the base earth draw
Me down in homage, and with reverent awe
I hid mine eyes, the sight unfit to share.

Then rose I up and said: So poor abode,
And yet a Child of such divinity,
Is this some holy prophet sent of God?
Peace! peace! (the Wise Men whispered) it is He,
A Prophet, yea: but of Jehovah willed,
The Prophecy of every age fulfilled.

III

Omnipotent, eternal, infinite,
Such attributes are His if this is He,
(I said) who holds the universe in fee
For His creative touch, and in Whose might
The earth, the sun, the countless orbs of light —
Successive chain of pond'rous majesty —
Are but as bubbles, and what less are we!
Weaker than I, and I a parasite
To that which came from nothing by His hand,
If He this Infant on the meanly straw,
Doth He not His infinity transcend
In alien clay to wrap His boundless awe?
How can it be? (I cried). Peace! (came reply)
Behold the Child, and ask not How, but Why!

GETHSEMANE

Infinite Sorrow pouring forth Thy tears!
Lest we behold our sorrows magnified,
And with despairing lips blaspheme the years
That smite us sore, when but the flesh hath cried.
Of its own weakness, through th' impatient brine
Of still less patient eyes, come we in thought
To Thy grief's garden, Lord! and unto Thine
Our fullest woe how shrinketh it to naught!
Thou infinite — we finite; Thou for all
The myriad myriads of Thy heart's love weeping
With love that hath no limit: we but fall
Beneath one stroke of grief. Behold the deeping
Of our soul's anguish, Christ! and teach us blend
Our tears with Thine, full patient, to the end!



EASTER MORN

Bright casque and helmet glitter round the tomb,
As to and fro the mailed sentries glide,
Their vigil keeping near the Crucified;
The tremulous stars with ghostly gleams illumine
Their polished steel, and tint each nodding plume;
With ribald laugh His torn flesh they deride,
And jest in whisper at His spear-rent side,
Till dawn, approaching, melts the leaden gloom.
Over the distant hills the glorious morn
In splendor sends a thousand-tinted ray,
When lo! the Hand, by cruel nails all torn,
The tomb unseals, the great stone rolls away,
And, guards confounding, through the yielding door
The risen Christ comes forth to die no more.

THE ASSUMPTION

Throbbing with silence stood the waiting throngs
Anear the Throne expectant. All was peace.
On heaven's breast the surging floods of light,
Vast as the realms of the eternal skies,
In golden billows rose in majesty.
The triumph-psalms of heavenly choirs, that late
Had thrilled the spheres with their celestial sound,
In shoreless waves, rolling to shoreless worlds,
Ebb'd multitudinous: and, dying thus,
For each receding ripple that went out,
Succeeding waves of silence entered in —
Silence supreme, save fitfully there came
Some strain obscure, "wove in sidereal realms."

Exultant notes hung quivering on fair lips,
And eager hands, full-poised above the string,
Trembling with love and sweet expectancy,
Were lifted up impatient for the stroke,
Waiting the Great Musician to command.
Sudden, through whirling worlds, from one far off
In horizontal distance, there came up
A Voice that thrilled Elysium with its sweet:
“Come, my Belovèd, from Libanus come!
Arise! make haste! for winter is now past!”

And lo, from the revolving planet, borne
By myriad myriads and ten myriad hosts,
The radiant King of Glory at her side,
And countless choirs and harpers at her feet,
A summer's calm upon her lustrous brow,
Robed in the sun and girdled with the stars,
Sublime in love, in all things else most fair,
Came one in glory, “flowing with delights.”

“’Tis she — our Queen!” then rose th’ exultant
shout;

And voice and trumpet and impatient string
In psalm triumphant joined, till heaven shook
With harmony, touching on all the chords
Of God’s eternal love: for she, the height,
The depth, the very breadth of love,
She all-beneficent, had entered in,
The Queen of Heaven, angels, and of men.

ST. DOMINIC

As when the sun lifts luminous in the sky,
Full with the fires of God's transcendent might,
And fearless shakes his potent shafts of light
Into the vulnerable mists that fly
Before his onslaught, till afar and nigh
There is not aught of gloom or hideous blight,
While golden day, succeeding vanquished night,
Gilds the glad earth with sweet tranquillity:
So came God's soldier — glowing with the fires
Of His eternal love — into the gloom,
And in his hand the mightiest weapon, Truth:
He struck, and lo! joy shone where erst was ruth,
The hosts of night went whirling to their doom —
And burst the heavenly dawn of pure desires.

TO A SCHOLAR

Born for the search, the ever-thirsting soul
Doth seek for wisdom. Where is wisdom found?
Thou soughtest it upon sweet Learning's scroll,
In star-born Art, in Music's angel sound.
Many thy steps along thought-paven ways
That led to Wisdom's sanctuary: thou
Her fane hast entered; and of emerald bays
She twines a wreath of triumph for thy brow.
But Wisdom hath her phantoms; and far more
Than these thou soughtest: for thou hast discerned
A fairer meed in the eternal lore
Of God's sweet love, and, justly wise, hast learned
Wisdom is true when her communion brings
The soul to intercourse with better things.

THE DAY

Dawn comes: the crimson sky;
Youth-flushed and strong and fair,
And young hopes beaming in the eye,
Forth to the fallow fields we bear
The keen, impatient share.

Noon comes: the solstice-sun;
We falter in the heat;
And, faint with labors scarce begun,
Out of the furrow incomplete
We turn our weary feet.

Night comes: how swift they come,
Night and her solemn hours!
Stooped with toil we bear us home,
We cast our plow at the meadow-bars,
And look up at the stars.

THE PENITENT

How do they burn my lips, these words of mine
That cry forth penance! and my heart is torn
By the keen lashes of my spirit's scorn
For its unholy house! Come, Thou Divine
Help of my soul, the gift of tears incline
Unto me, that new sorrow may be born
For each old evil in my bosom worn —
Then to Thy will my poor will I resign.
Oh, could repentance but uproot the past!
Sown with good deeds, the soil of life would bear
God's golden grace in harvest manifold!
But in my grief, for worlds of words too vast,
I can but cry, *Peccavi*! Sweet Christ, hear!
And from my spirit wash the cankerous mold!

THE SOUL'S PASSION

Here in my Garden of Gethsemane
The bitter passion of my soul I pour:
Christ help me! Christ — my Christ! Who
 suffering bore
The sins that were and all the sins to be
Through Thy long passion, up steep Calvary,
And on the summit of Thine anguish tore
From a doomed world the bonds of sin, no more
That sin may rule, but Peace — and Love of Thee.
Oh, make my love more strong! My passion make
As a consuming fire, that it may burn
The all unholy dross within my soul!
And by the Passion of Thine own love, take
The every stain away, and in this urn
Of crumbling clay make Thou the spirit whole!

AT DEATH

Faint-fluttering spirit struggling to be free!
I hear its wings against the prison bars
Beat audibly. Lo, the deep darkness lowers;
But through the gloom the yearning soul can see
The bounds of time merge in eternity,
And patient watch keeps through the long night hours.
O spreading pinions, eager for the stars,
In yonder ether soon your home shall be!
Plume thou thy wings, sweet spirit! Frail the chain
That binds thee prisoned: ah, the hand were vain
That strove to hold thee in so poor abode
When freedom waits thee in Elysium's light!
Sweet Christ! the chain bursts! the swift wings
 take flight!
Go, gentle spirit, forth to meet thy God!

DEATH

Oppressive night:
A quivering spark
Goes out in the dark —
And all is light!

AUDUBON

I hear not ever a bird in melody
Pour forth its little soul upon the air;
I see not ever a droning insect bear
Its wings in dubious course, nor carry me
Through field or forest, where God's minstrelsy
In bounteous joy drowns every voice of care;
I smell not ever a blossom's perfumes rare,
But comes a thought, immortal sage, of thee!
These were his poets and his books: and each
Taught him its secrets that he us might teach;
And that his labors were not spent in vain,
Attest, ye winds that through the forest fly,
Attest, ye children of the clear blue sky,
Singing his praise in God's most beauteous fane

A MAY FANCY

Out from the grim, bare walls of the city with travail
 agroaning!

Up through the meadow-sweets, with winged honey-
 bearers droning!

Into the fresh deep wood, where the old oak, new
 in glory,

Draweth the tender twig to incline to its wondrous
 story!

Lo, how the locust-kiss the wild air sets athrobbing!

Lo, how the arching bough is bathed in the dove's
 low sobbing!

And hark! from the covert bower, in the sweet deep,
 still and shady,

The voice of the hermit-thrush that wakes with the
 name of Our Lady!

The violet, dipped in dew, with the fresh May-
 breath aquiver;

The glad child-voice of the brook that laughs and
 runs to the river;

The gold-hearted May-apple bloom, to its mother-
 leaf near clinging;

The bluebell, skirting the glade, its delicate notes
 out-ringing;

The blackberries, deep in the wood, their snow-
 blooms drifting o'er them;

The wood-wind, dripping with sweets, and the
 myriad blooms that bore them:

Fair children of May are these, all nursed in the
 deep-wood shady,

And glad rings the angel-voice that offers them up
 to Our Lady.

A giant elm uptorn where the timid chipmunk
 lingers;
A dead beech, clutching wild at the wind with its
 skeleton fingers,
A desolate nest in its bough with never a song to
 cheer it;
A hawthorn gaunt and bare and a famished wild-
 rose near it;
The old-year leaves that hiss at the soft winds o'er
 them playing;
The vine that forgot to green from a cloud-riven
 maple swaying:
Ah, the mystic child drinks deep of the sighs of the
 greenwood shady,
And pours them back in a song that melts with the
 name of Our Lady.

O Soul, in the dust and the heat of the busy world
 repining,
Away through the meadow-sweets where the golden
 sun is shining!
And into the sacred haunts of the tranquil deep-
 wood take thee,
Where, full with the Sweet of Sweets, an exulting
 song shall wake thee!
And if with its rapture-throbs there cometh an echo
 of sighing,
And under the living hopes thou findest the dead
 hopes lying,
Drink deep of the joys, O Soul, and the sighs of the
 wildwood shady,
And, pouring them back in song, offer them up to
 Our Lady!

THE HERMIT THRUSH

A dense thicket:

The old-year leaves piled thick on the ground;
The violet, turning her wistful eye
Up through the warp of leaves to the sky;
The lush grass, weaving her woof around;
A fallen oak, slow wasting away,
The blackberry, over his body bowed,
Drawing the threads of her delicate shroud
Round and about his poor decay.

A deep-wood poet:

He kissed the winding-sheet of the king;
He drank of the delicate breath of the flower;
He felt the subtile hush of the bower;
A prisms ray tipped gold his wing;
Then, drunk with the joys around him there,
He loosed his soul, aquiver with song,
With the notes of his sweet love echoing long,
And flung it full on the ambient air.

O dense thicket!

O deep-wood poet!

Is there no calm in this life of ours,
No solitude with a trysting-place,
There to meet our sweet love face to face?
Ay, there are bowers
With their deep-wood flowers,
Tipped with the rays of golden grace.

Then, though we find the poor decay
Of a fond life-hope slow wasting away,
Let us go, let us fly to the holy keep,
Where, rapt with the joys of the still retreat,
Our quivering souls will wake and leap
In lilting song
That will echo long
The name of a Love ever sweet, ever sweet!

THE SPARROW

A sultry day:
The city scorched with sweltering heat;
The leaves curled up on the sickly trees;
Vapors, pregnant with foul disease,
Drifting up from the glaring street;
The gray brick walls athirst for rain;
A tenement, tall and grim and bare;
A narrow room with its fetid air,
And a wasted child on a bed of pain.

A sparrow despised:
He near to the open window drew;
Panting with heat and with drooping wing,
He paused on the ledge; then, twittering,
Into the narrow chamber flew.
Around he swept in his nervous flight;
He fluttered near to the fevered child;
He fanned her cheek, and her thin lip smiled
At the passing breath of that sweet delight.

O sultry day!
O sparrow despised!
Times there are when the sultry hours
Of the fevered world hang heavy o'er,
And panting cries
My heart to the skies
For the gentle touch of the blessed showers;
And, within, my soul is faint and sore.
Ah, then I would have some humble sweet,
Of the world despised, my anguish greet,
That, brief though the breath of its passing flight,
In my soul will trace
God's smiling face
And fill it all with a pure delight.

THE WOODPECKER

A ruined oak:
The proud top rotting upon the ground;
The trunk, half dead, bearing the trace
Of Jove's finger down to its base;
Parasites clinging around and round;
A blunt snag, heart rotting, of ghastly mien,
And cloud-shivered, looking down
On a lonely bough, whose stolid frown
Was scant concealed by a sickly green.

A crimson-hood:

He pecked at the snag till he pierced its shell;
He burrowed down in its heart's decay;
He called his mate; and lo, one day,
Four fledglings down from the old snag fell;
And the happy call of the birds awoke
(Though the voice was keen and shrill and clear)
Echoes of life that brought good cheer
To the palsied bough of the poor old oak.

O ruined oak!

O crimson-hood!

Is my life storm-shivered as thine, O tree?
Have I proud hopes that rot on the ground?
Let them lie! Let them be!
But if one dead hope in my heart be found,
Let some humble thought which God may send
Burrow down in that poor decay,
And, nesting there, bring forth some day
The fledgling songs that, shrill and clear
And sharp though be the voice, will blend
In one glad call
That over all
My soul will pour sweet, sweet good cheer.

PRAYER-BIRDS

The soul is a nest
Whence prayer-birds spring:
Some leap sky-far,
God-eager of wing.
Some flutter to earth
Even as they sing.

AD PATREM

Thy hand upled me o'er the rugged steep,
Through intricate paths, to the serener air,
Where all the upland fields are clothed in fair
Capacious suns; nor didst thou quail, though deep
The tempests thundered near, but through the
sweep

Of wind and flood, breasting the storm, didst bear
Thee on, till we the heights attained, and there,
Thy task consumed, thy tired lids drooped in sleep.
Oh, if the flowers, plucked wild, which thee I bring
Could make thy pillow sweeter, every thorn
That tore my flesh in plucking would be sweet!
But I behold my simple offering,
And, all thy brow unworthy to adorn,
I can but strew them at thy hallowed feet.

THE ABSENT ONE

Are we all here to-night? Nay, one is gone:
One chair is vacant near the hearth. The bright
Lone beacon in the window sheds its light
In vain for whom we watch. So has it shone
For weary months, when the long day was done,
To homeward guide his wandering steps aright.
He will not come — he will not come to-night!
And lo, how swift the gathering glooms come on!
Be comforted, my mother: he is here!
I feel his hand smooth back my tangled hair
With mild caress. I kneel me at his chair
And hear him say, "My child, my child!" in clear,
Sweet accents. Come, my mother, come thou near:
But nay — sweet God! I dream! He is not there!

A LITTLE WHILE

A little while, and then my toil is ended;
And when the task seems long, the pathway steep,
I think of one who has before ascended
And on the quiet summit lies asleep.

A little while — and lo, the end is nighing!
Heartaches shall cease, heart-chords shall bind
 anew;
Two heads shall rest where now but one is lying,
Four hands shall clasp where now there are but two.

THE ORIGIN OF SONG

I like the Poet who, when Persia's King
Questioned, "Whence cometh Poesy?" replied:
"God looked down from heaven one day
When earth was sweet with waking spring:
'Behold my handiwork!' He cried.
The gloried hosts looked down that way,
When sudden! voice and throbbing string
Awoke so vast a wave of song
It burst the gates of paradise;
And through the vast expanse of skies
Sweeping from world to world along,
It rolled in measure full and strong,
Until a fragment fell to earth —
A pilgrim note from heaven's song;
And lo! where erst was sullen dearth
Of silken sound, a voice awoke,

A myriad lips in measure spoke,
A myriad trembling strings awoke,
A myriad vibrant chords awoke,
A myriad anxious pipes awoke,
A myriad waiting reeds awoke,
A myriad eager harps awoke,
Responsive to the Master's stroke.
And so, through ages all along,
Have rolled the ocean-waves of song;
And so, through ages yet to be,
Shall wake the psalms of Poesy,
Reflecting heaven's own symphony!"

A FIRST LOVE

I learned to love her while in tender years;
God gave her to me, and as I caressed
Her fair, sweet brow, and took her to my breast,
And heard her gentle whisper in mine ears,
Soothing with song and joyous lute my fears
Of life's vicissitudes, I closer pressed
Her to my throbbing bosom, and was blest
With her sweet breath, sweet smiles, and sweeter
tears.

I loved her then, and so I love her now;
Each passing year hath made my love the stronger;
And but for her light touch upon my brow
My griefs were greater and my toils were longer.
She was my first love, she whom God hath given —
Music's her name, my life, my soul, my heaven!

TO A BROKEN LUTE

O silent effigy of Song,
Speak through thy shattered strings:
Doth cold forgetfulness belong
To the warm heart that sings?
Ah, when the poor, mute chords around
My broken lute entwine,
If in one heart one note be found,
What recompense were mine!

BARCAROLE

Rest thee, my gondolier,
And drift thy barge but slowly:
Pause, for her song I hear —
And my lady's song is holy!
O'er the responsive strings
Her soft brown hand is sweeping,
And her song the night-wind brings,
With its dreams and wails and weeping.
How doth each cadence cry
Like a soul in anguish yearning!
For me her warm lips sigh,
And for her my heart is burning.
Rest thee, my gondolier,
Here where the reeds are clinging:
Hush! for her voice I hear —
The voice of my lady singing!

Rest thee, my gondolier,
And let thy barge go drifting:
For the gentle song I hear
My soul to heaven is lifting.
Oh, would it were clasped in mine -
The hand that trails the viol!
But its notes and her song divine —
They teach me self-denial.
From the sea the winds begin
To roll the lazy surges:
Let the pilgrim waves throb in
O'er the gondola's low verges!
Rest thee, my gondolier,
Here where the reeds are clinging:
Hush! for her voice I hear —
The voice of my lady singing!

MAURINE

I dip my oar in the dark bayou,
I look the vine-clung lattice through,
And there behold my love so true,
Maurine! Maurine! Maurine!
The sweet magnolia sighs with me,
I moor my bark by the cypress tree,
And my guitar I touch to thee,
Maurine! Maurine! Maurine!
The woodbine, trailing
Thy lattice railing,
Conceals thine eyes so blue, Maurine!
Nay do not hide thee,
Come, sit beside me,
We'll drift the dark bayou, Maurine!

Let me but stroke thy glossy hair,
Let me but kiss thy hand so fair,
What with my bliss could then compare?
Maurine! Maurine! Maurine!
The stars reflect in the dark bayou,
They found their gleams in thine eyes so blue,
Oh, come, we'll drift in my canoe,
Maurine! Maurine! Maurine!
The woodbine, trailing
Thy lattice railing,
Conceals thine eyes so blue, Maurine!
Nay, do not hide thee,
Come, sit beside me,
We'll drift the dark bayou, Maurine!

IN OLD TUCSON

In old Tucson, in old Tucson,
What cared I how the days ran on?
A brown hand trailing the viol-string,
Hair as black as the raven's wing,
Lips that laughed and a voice that clung
To the sweet old airs of the Spanish tongue
Had drenched my soul with a mellow rime
Till all life shone, in that golden clime,
With the tender glow of the morning-time.
In old Tucson, in old Tucson,
How swift the merry days ran on!

In old Tucson, in old Tucson,
How soon the parting day came on!
But I oft turn back in my hallowed dreams,
And the low adobe a palace seems,
Where her sad heart sighs and her sweet voice sings
To the notes that throb from her viol-strings.
Oh, those tear-dimmed eyes and that soft brown
 hand!
And a soul that glows like the desert sand —
The golden fruit of a golden land!
In old Tucson, in old Tucson,
The long, lone days, O Time, speed on!

SHE SANG TO ME

She sang to me in the moonlight
A quaint old Southern tune,
And I know not which was softer,
Her voice or the Tampa moon;
But I know her song was sweeter
Than the sweetest breath of June.

A guitar she touched, but softly,
And my oars kept time to her lay,
While her light cadenza quivered
On her lips ere it tripped away,
And the moss-bound cypress answered
As it soughed and dipped to the bay.

She sang to me, and the music,
As the Southern moon hung o'er,
And her mellow voice was echoed
By the swamps of the Tampa shore,
Brought a calm to my troubled bosom
It never had known before.

Alas, that it must have ended!
But now I am far away,
And my heart is filled with a longing
No voice hath power to allay,
Till I find in my soul an echo
Of the song she sang on the bay.

HER 'CELLO

Hark! how her 'cello sobs
As her hand upon it lingers!
And oh, how the frail string throbs
Beneath her lily fingers!
Soft are his song and his sigh
As her bow his love-notes waketh,
And jealous am I, am I,
For love to Undine he maketh —
Oh, jealous am I, am I,
For love to Undine he maketh!

How do her glist'ning eyes
Beam on the breathing 'cello!
How do his sobs and his sighs
Come forth 'neath her touch so mellow!
On her breast his head doth lie
As her hand his love-song waketh,
And jealous am I, am I,
For love to Undine he maketh —
Oh, jealous am I, am I,
For love to Undine he maketh!

A WOMAN'S FAITH

"He loves me — he loves me not;"
And the petals fluttered down
From the one bright rose she'd gathered,
And were lost 'mong the leaves of brown.

"He loves me — he loves me not;"
And she sighed, "Ah, me! ah, me!"
While the wind caught the falling petals
And tossed them over the lea.

"He loves me — he loves me not;"
And the crimson petals played
And floated awhile in the sunlight,
Then fluttered into the shade.

"He loves me — he loves me not;"
Then she flung the poor bud down,
And under her foot she crushed it
And hid it with leaves of brown.

"He loves me not? He loves me not?"
'Tis a false tale that you tell,
O rose, for I know my lover
Loves me, and loves me well.

"He has said it over and over,
And his love is true, I know:
For I have more faith in my lover
Than in all the flowers that grow!"

THINE IMAGE WAS ANEAR

Thine image was anear me yesternight,
So like thyself, thyself it was methought;
The tear that from thy brown eye sprung was caught
Upon thy ebon lash, and shone as bright
As when in youth thou camest, thy pure heart light
With buoyant love, and, all-confiding, taught
My soul the rapture love in thee had wrought,
Till in Love's books I grew most erudite.
I looked to see the rose-sweet crimson rise
To thy pale cheek when I did call thee fair,
And I pronounced thy name thrice full and loud:
But lo, a void was all before mine eyes,
Nor came an answer from the empty air —
Naught save the hollow rustling of a shroud.

THE SHEPHERDESS' SONG

Awake, my song, for the day gives warning,
Bright in the east is the star of morning,
On the quivering grass the dew is shining,
While for one I love my heart is pining —
My merry shepherd lad!
I await his pipe, for my heart is lonely;
I await his answering song, but only
From the drowsy crags the echoes answer,
Save down in the reeds a piping dancer,
But not my shepherd lad!
Oh, where have thy vagrant flocks been straying?
And why is thy tune so long delaying?
My merry shepherd lad!

Awake, my song, for the dawn's abreaking,
Down in the vale are the birds awaking,
By the mountain hut is the watchdog baying,
But what is the song of my love delaying?
My merry shepherd lad!
Hark! What sweets to my ears are creeping?
'Tis his merry pipe as he comes aleaping
Down from the steeps with his sweet love-story,
While the bursting sun sheds a golden glory
Around my shepherd lad!
Oh, where have thy vagrant flocks been straying?
And why was thy kiss so long delaying?
My own true shepherd lad!



DONALD SO TRUE

How can I say farewell to thee ?
Donald, my Donald, so true!
When parting's all but death to me,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
Thy ship is lying in the bay;
Ah, when it carries thee away,
No more will Moray's hills be gay,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
Ah, thou art all of heaven to me,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
How can I say farewell to thee ?
Donald, my Donald, so true!

How can I say farewell to thee ?
Donald, my Donald, so true!
Though knowing thou'lt return to me,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
My tears, alas! my cheek shall burn,
My heart must bleed, my soul must yearn
Till thou to Moray dost return,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
Ah, thou art all of heaven to me,
Donald, my Donald, so true!
How can I say farewell to thee ?
Donald, my Donald, so true!

THAT WAS MAY

This is the same sweet spot,
And yet some change is here:
Dead is the gray old elm
And the brook runs not so clear;
And the house, with its circling porches,
Has fallen to gross decay:
But this is the drear November,
And that was the rose-sweet May.

Here you and I once paused
Beneath the cloven moon,
And we sang our song together —
But it ended, ah, too soon!
Now naught save the wind is singing,
And the skies are dull and gray:
But this is the chill November,
And that was the fragrant May.

I touched your slender hand
And looked down in your eyes;
But a moist hung on your lashes
And your lips were sweet with sighs.
Where now is that hand so tender?
Like the mist it stole away:
But this is the dark November,
And that was the golden May.

This is the same sweet spot —
But nay, 'tis not the same:
Your hand stretched not to greet me,
Your lips called not my name;
Your voice rang not o'er the meadows
As I came up the tangled way:
But this is the bleak November,
And that — ah, that was May!

A FRAGMENT

One day when my soul was lonely
I searched a forgotten place,
Where woven around were the cobwebs
Like a netting of rare old lace.

Maybe my soul in its longing
Some truant solace had sought,
Maybe that my vagrant fingers
Had found that nook untaught.

But I came on a mouldering packet
That burst 'neath my tremulous clutch,
And I found 'mong its treasures a fragment
But it crumbled and broke at my touch.

I remembered the packet was willed me
By a friend of my youth when he died;
But ne'er the ribbon that bound it
Till then had my fingers untied.

I sat me down by my window,
And the fragment I spread on my knee,
And I hastily scanned it, anxious
To know what its tale might be.

I saw 'twas an old, old poem
He'd penned in his earlier years:
It was yellow with time, and blotted
And blurred by his passionate tears.

Like a Stoic I read, for 'twas buried
So long in that mouldering spot,
The tale that it told was forgotten,
Though the soul that inspired it was not.

But a breath came up from my garden
As I paused on a liquid rhyme,
And it seemed 'twas the breath of a summer
I had known once on a time —

A summer whose days were golden
With the glow of his tender love,
A summer whose bliss, if eternal,
Must have rivaled heaven's above.

Then swift came my thoughts upon me
Like the violent rushing of waves,
And out of the past rose visions
Like ghosts from neglected graves.

Of a sudden my soul was awakened,
And memories came as I read,
Such as come when you gaze at the garment
Of one you have loved, and is dead.

THE POEM

"Sweet was the breath of the even;
Soft fell the gleams of the stars;
Bright were the eyes of my lady
As we sang by the old meadow-bars.



*"I saw 'twas an old, old poem
He'd penned in his earlier years"*

"The song died away in the cedars,
And a touch of her hand I stole,
When forth burst the ravishing torrents
From Love's Aganippe — my soul.

"I spake — could my bosom contain it,
That love it had prisoned so long?
Ask if the robin is silent
When his soul is o'erflowing with song!

"I spake — and my tremulous whisper
Into passionate eloquence grew:
I repeated the old, sweet story —
But to her and to me it was new.

"I paused; and the word was trembling
On her lips that she strove to say;
And low bent my ear to hear it,
When she softly whispered —— "
But stay!

Why was thy hand so reckless
When it touched this spot, O Time?
And why did his tears in falling
Forever blot out his rhyme?

Maybe it was best her answer
Mine eyes were denied to see;
Maybe it was best his secret
Forever a secret should be.

I sighed, and the crumbling fragment
Went fluttering down to my feet:
But I think 'twas the tear of an angel
That made it incomplete.

THE ROSE AND THE THORN

I seek my garden for the rose
That blossomed in the blushing morn;
But lo, the twilight gleams disclose
A bud of all its petals shorn,
And 'neath it frowns the naked thorn!

TO A CHILD

Chalice of snow,
Thy crystal'd purity mine eyes profane
Dare gaze not on, lest, gazing, shall the pain
Of darkened sight be sent, '
Struck blind by the all-dazzling glow
Of the host glorified that dwells within
Thy sacred grail: for eyes deformed with sin
Live not in light that look upon thy hallowed
sacrament.

Chalice of snow,
Alas, too soon the suns of many days
Shall melt thy splendor! and the devious ways
Of rill and brook and river
Shall find the several parts that flow
Seaward, seaward! Flow clear, ye atomed parts!
Cool fevered lips, calm souls, soothe aching hearts:
And, sea attained, unto its flood the gloried host
deliver!

A CHILD SLEEPING

A wreath of lily and of rose
Is she, half hid the white
Beneath the crimson glows
Of the external dominant: and yet the light,
The lily-light
And lily-sweet.
Out of the tinted petals creep,
Till, like the ardent flames that leap
Above their glowing ember-seat,
The bud that burst immaculate
Doth o'er the crimson dominate.
Yet, rose and lily, all complete,
Repose full-essenced in the wreath —
One seraph-pure, one angel-sweet —
Whose being none may know except with
 holden eyes:
For each is born of God's own breath
And plucked in paradise.

THE PICTURE BOOK

Sometimes, late in autumn, when the long, thin
streams of rain
Beat with a dull precision against the window-pane,
You sit before your fireplace and read familiar
names
And find familiar faces in the bright, fantastic
flames.

You sit and muse and ponder o'er the changes time
has wrought,
Till you hear the imps of fancy tapping at the doors
of thought;
You fling the portals open, and they all come
trooping in,
Each with a rare old story of what was — and might
have been.

So I sit this autumn evening in my big, old-fashioned
chair,
Looking down into the embers, which return my
vacant stare —
Sit musing, while my fancies cast a shadow of regret
Over things I thought forgotten — and things I'd
fain forget.

I turn in weak abstraction to the bookshelves at
my right,
And I scan the musty volumes in the dim, uncertain
light,
Until my vagrant fingers in a dark and dusty nook
Find a legacy of childhood — a little picture book.

I spread its paper covers, and on a vacant page
Is scrawled the name of "Bessie," in pencil, and
her age;
But a gathering mist obscures it, and I close my
languid eyes,
While from out the past a vision, like a wraith, I
see arise.

I see two lips alaughing above a muslin gown;
I see two eyes asparkling beneath her tresses brown;
And I hear her childish prattle as she climbs my
knee to look
Upon the gaudy colors of that little picture book.

I turn the leaves in silence. Each picture bears a
trace
Of childish grief or gladness which time can ne'er
erase:
This one in fancied sorrow she blotted with her
tears;
And here the marks of fingers, preserved through
all the years;

This one is thumbed and ragged, and its dwarfs
and giants tell
How it held her soul enraptured with a fascinating
spell.
I glance back o'er my shoulder for a pair of twink-
ling eyes;
I listen for her laughter, and her "Ah!" of glad
surprise.

I pause to hear the clapping of her hands in sweet
delight,
And I wait to feel the pressure of her arms around
me tight.
Oh, what a cheat is fancy! I watch and wait in vain,
For vanished is my vision and it will not come
again!

'Tis gone from me forever! and the voice of my
despair
Cries out against the anguish that my soul was
doomed to bear:
But the wind alone gives answer, and its melancholy
wail
Seems the voice of frightened goblins, flying, dying
on the gale.

I look into the fireplace, but it mocks my withered
heart
With its ash beneath the embers; while the rain,
with sudden start,
Beats hard against my window, like the tears I
scarce can brook,
Falling fast upon the pages of that little picture
book.



A LADY'S PICTURE

A little child on her father's knee
Toyed with his golden chain;
And she clapped her hands in baby glee,
As she hummed a child's refrain.

From the father's pipe the fragrant smoke
Curled up in the languid air;
And his great heart swelled at the thoughts that
 woke
As he smoothed her tangled hair.

From the polished chain a locket hung:
She pressed on the golden case;
And lo, at her touch it open sprung
And within was a woman's face.

•
“Ah, pretty lady!” murmured she;
And the prattling questions came:
Who could the pretty lady be?
And what was the lady's name?

The father drew her close to his breast
With its infinite depth of pain;
And his answer died on his lips as they pressed
That image again and again.

Strange were his sighs in her baby ear,
And, awed her garrulous tongue,
Up to his bosom she nestled near
And close round his neck she clung.

Then her baby blue eyes grew heavy with sleep,
And her laugh woke not again;
And the song she sang gave way to the deep
Sad notes of the wind's refrain.

Then he tucked her snug in her little bed,
And his heart felt keen its sting,
As, "Poor little motherless thing!" he said,
"Poor little motherless thing!"

AN EASTER LILY

Young was the garden (for spring was young)
And the garrulous child-plants told
Of days that would come all fringed and strung
With jewels of poppy-gold;
And iterant I kept asking, "When
Will the lilies burst and blow?"
For, schooled in the sordid marts of men,
Pray, how was I to know?

The sun smiled warmth in the greening days,
And the stars kept watch in the night;
The robin turned his dubious phrase
To a theme of full delight;
And with each new sun and each new song
To the garden-glebe I'd go
And ask why tarried the bloom so long —
For how was I to know?

Fair were the skies on the Easter morn
That awoke with a joyous note
That arose in an anthem-phrase, newborn
In the depths of the robin's throat;
And I heard a voice in the garden call,
"Come see how the lilies blow!"
And I thought 'twas the bloom-sprites' madrigal —
For how was I to know?

Then straight to the garden I went, and there,
Lo, a lily awaited me,
With the pollen-gold a-glint in her hair
And her lips singing merrily —
For a child-face laughed in the garden-home
Where I'd watched for the buds to blow:
Ah, maybe the lilies were all abloom —
But how was I to know?

THE STARS

Child, upon thy mother's knee,
Gazing yonder through the night,
Why thy burst of baby glee?
Why thy rapturous delight?

Stars? Athwart the evening skies
Countless glittering orbs are spread:
What are they unto thine eyes
That have Wisdom's page ne'er read?

Coyly then the little girl
Answer lisps in baby tone:
Some are gem and some are pearl
Strewn from God's celestial throne;

Some are angels' laughing eyes,
Peeping down from heaven's blue,
Some are holes in paradise,
All its glories leaking through!

Simple child! In books grown old,
I search deep the boundless night,
And in each fair star behold
Some majestic sun, whose light,

On its circling planets shed,
Feeds them with life's warmth; and so
From night's faintest glow-worms, spread
O'er the firmament, there grow

Suns on many suns, sublime
In harmonious motion, one
Far to one in cadenced time
Right saluting, sun to sun,

Spheres on myriad spheres, each true
Unto its appointed course,
Worlds on worlds that reach into
Universe on universe —

System round vast system, till
All the glorious firmament
Finds its center in the will
Of the One Omnipotent.

So the child, and so do I
God's sublime creation scan:
And I wonder, musingly,
Which is happier, child or man?

A DEAD SUN

Methought I saw a sun, massive but spent,
Pendant in space, and round about it sped
Black, lifeless orbs, like their great center — dead!
With yawning chasms it fathomless was rent,
Wherein a boiling liquid lava pent,
Fumed white, then glowed a mass of fiery red,
So deep imprisoned on its burning bed
It had no power to light the firmament.
The sun had died: and death to him was death
To all the great, majestic, stately spheres
That circled round, lifeless, no light, no breath!
And then I cried, as, gazing on those biers,
I whither saw our own world journeyeth,
“How many years, how many myriad years!”

THE HOUR OF PRAYER

In ocean's arms the sun swoons in the west;
A holy quiet steeps the dewy air,
Save over earth, sea, sky, and everywhere
Soft murmurs steal, half uttered, half suppressed,
Lulling the world to revery and rest:
'Tis Mother Nature pouring out in prayer
Her ravished spirit. Silence: let us share
This sweet devotion on our mother's breast.
For prayer — what is it? But the weak reflection
Of Divine Beauty through our frail perfection;
And this I see in nature day by day;
But when comes gentle evening, earth, sea, heaven,
Paint full the glories unto nature given;
And we are part of nature: let us pray!

AN IDLE MOMENT

Irresolute I walked a mountain way
And plucked the wild-flowers idly as I went,
Careless in thought, for on no mission bent,
Save from the city's noisome marts to stray,
I wandered aimless as a child at play,
And scarce took heed of my environment,
Pausing to joy the hawthorn's languid scent,
Or hearken to some wildwood roundelay.
Then all was peace; the robin's voice was stilled;
Nor mellow gurgle woke the soulful thrush;
Nor wind was moving, trees were motionless:
And as my soul the tranquil quiet filled,
I bowed my head beneath the holy hush,
Lost in the trancèd charm of nothingness.

DAWN: AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

Hail radiant morn: On this high pinnacle
Dost thou all glorious burst upon my sight,
And these vast crags, whence the deep glooms take
flight,
Ebbing in sullen silence, feel the spell
Of thy entrancèd waking! The deep swell
Of the wild torrent, born upon the height
Of the tall peak in glinting raiment dight,
Lifts underfoot from yon gulf terrible.
Here Nature quaffs, in majesty sublime,
The rare ether of God's serener skies,
And on her brow His purest blessing lies.
O Mount, that through the æons of thy youth
Hast held disdained the ravages of Time,
How art thou like to Christ's eternal Truth!

TWILIGHT: AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

Down the tall peaks, where high the drooping pine
Stretches its mantle of eternal green,
There falls a veil of purple. Low between
The gaping walls of the deep pass incline
The long, slant rays of the faint evenshine.
The stealthy shadows sweep the mellow sheen
From slope to crest, and, over all, serene,
Broods the sweet spirit of a calm divine.
Lo, as majestic he declines, the day,
From plain to slope and slope to summit driven,
Loth to depart, and lingering in the gray,
Thin clouds which erst his keen light-shafts have
 riven,
Gathers his glories all in one vast ray
And hurls them back athwart the dome of heaven.

THE TEMPEST'S VOICE

I saw the storm come down the mountain side
Draped in the vesture of black majesty:
O'er sunless tracts the weltering clouds surged by,
Dissolved, and formed anew, like a vast tide
Shore-lashing. The long thunders rose and died;
And Jove tumultuous from his throne on high
Hurled his fierce shafts athwart the vap'rous sky
Till the huge mountains trembled terrified.
With roaring multitudinous then woke
The storm: rocks, crags, by its rude hand were
 swayed,
And stalwart pines were leveled by its stroke
As falls the wheat before the reaper's blade;
While from the ruins came articulate:
"How great Thou art, all-potent, God, how great!"

A KENTUCKY SUNRISE

Faint streaks of light; soft murmurs; sweet
Meadow-breaths; low winds; the deep gray
Yielding to crimson; a lamb's bleat;
Soft-tinted hills; a mockbird's lay:
And the red Sun brings forth the Day.

A KENTUCKY SUNSET

The great Sun dies in the west; gold
And scarlet fill the skies; the white
Daisies nod in repose; the fold
Welcomes the lamb; larks sink from sight:
The long shadows come, and then — Night.

NIGHT'S PRELUDE

I heard the busy voices of the day
Grow faint, then fall to silence. All was still;
Save from the wood a plaintive whip-poor-will
Called to his mate, and a lone bee, astray
Amid the clover, droned. The ceaseless lay
Sung by the wheel aturning at the mill
Its echo sent; and a lone robin's trill
Rang from an elm, then softly died away.
Then from the fields and lakes and all around
A myriad piping voices sent their call,
Deeping the silence with their hollow sound;
While o'er the world Night spread her solemn pall,
Betimes her reeds celestial strains let fall,
With all their measures filled with peace profound.

THE PASSING OF SUMMER

I saw her in her richest robes, all dight
In jeweled verdure sparkling in the morn,
Laden with fruits by vine and orchard borne;
Heather and wold with goldenrod were bright
And with the woodbine redolent; and white
The daisies nodded where the meads were shorn,
While o'er the fields wave-dipped the rustling corn:
So with each day she brought some new delight.
She plenty bears for every seed well sown;
The fruits she nurtures ripen day by day;
Fed by the dews, her grain has golden grown —
Tinted and bronzed by the sun's warm ray.
Rich are her gifts, but when her task is done,
She Autumn brings — then gently steals away.

TWO SPIRITS OF AUTUMN

I walked with Melancholy down the glade
Where trailed the rustling leaves; and here and there
Plucked I a trophy, autumn-steeped, and made
A crown, rude woven, for her silken hair;
But when, allured by her mellifluous sigh,
I raised the somber garland for her brow
And saw not Beauty's luster in her eye,
I flung it down and cried, "Not thou! not thou!"
I fled the glade, and lo, the yellow corn,
Weighting the fields with groaning plenitude,
Here garner-bound, there suing to be shorn,
Stretched vision-vast. There Plenty was: she
viewed
Her harvest-realm and smiled; while all about
Rang greeting-songs and joyful shout on shout.

GOD'S VOICE AND MAN'S

God said: "Go forth and toil
And lave thy brow in dew:
For none shall feast but those who moil,
And labor's sweat must steep the soil
Where fruits untended grew."

Man said: "Toil is a curse:
And from this bane released,
My fields the sweat of slaves shall nurse,
Who, toiling, moiling for my purse,
Must famish while I feast."

MORTGAGED

A high brown field:
The gaunt soil famished and overworn;
Ribs of rock jutting sharply through;
The stunted mullein of sickly hue;
And the slant, thin stalks of the old year's corn.
A silhouette 'gainst a flush of sky,
The ghost of a tree stands desolate;
And up where the briars for the night-dews wait
A worm-fence crawls in zigzag by.

A husbandman:
Around him sifts the evening glow;
He looks about o'er the barren field;
He sees the toil with its meager yield,
And rests, heart-sore, on his slender hoe;
For over the ridge, with its slanting rays,
Are the hungry mouths of his humble fold;
While one in the town, 'mid his chests of gold,
Wait-watches, counting the months and days.



*“He sees the toil with its meager yield,
And rests, heart-sore, on his slender hoe”*

O high brown field!
O husbandman!
Do I in the fields that are barren and worn,
With rock sharp-cleaving the hungry soil,
Pour forth my sweat as I work and moil,
While another waits to garner the corn —
The slender yield of my heavy toil?
Then seek thou the loam of the fertile field,
That, deeper than Time
And fresh as rime,
Will a harvest of infinite plenty yield:
And thou — myself — for the golden rays
Of the harvest sun,
That bringeth the meed when the toil is done,
Shalt wait-watch, counting the months and days.

THE WINTER'S TALE

What is the tale the winter tells,
With his falling snow
And his winds that blow?
“I place my blight on glens and dells,
I lay the meadows bare and waste,
I strip the heather on the fells
And check the torrent in its haste;
I choke the river as it flows,
I make the highlands desolate,
I wind the forests round with snows
And mark with ruin man's estate.
Away, ye imps of wind and snow!
Across the land my banner fling;
Over the vales and highlands go,
And tell all nature I am king!”

What is the tale the winter tells,
With his cutting wind
And his frosts unkind?
"I know where cruel famine dwells,
Where want prevails, where wail the weak;
I hang their eaves with icicles
And round their doors I dance and shriek;
I fan to flame the hectic flush,
Gaunt hunger sharpens at my breath,
I seek the sick and faint, and hush
Their moanings with the touch of death.
Away, ye imps of wind and snow!
Across the land my banner fling;
Over and down the chimneys blow,
And tell all people I am king!"

YOSEMITE

Veiled as a bride I see thee;
And hark! as the mist-maids pass,
I hear the wave-choir singing
The Kyries
And the Agnus Deis,
And the trees in their priestly vestments
Chanting the Nuptial Mass.

But where is thy spouse, O Maiden?
I the radiant Sun-god see,
And lo, as his each vast glory
In one smile blends,
He stately ascends
The steps of the high white altar:
And I know that the spouse is he.

CALIFORNIA

Were thy sun-splendors all that thou possess'd,
Thou wert a paradise: but thy vast sea,
Bearing balm-ethers on its tranquil breast,
Another spell of heaven awakes in thee.

Yet, with thy twofold Eden not content,
Thy fair groves, heavy with amaranth-spice
And deep rose-odors, delicately blent,
Make thee, sweet Land! a threefold paradise.



